

How Margaret Thatchers Government Covered Up a VIP Pedophile Ring

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Now that most of the major figures are dead, the truth is emerging about the systematic sexual abuse of children by members of the British government.

A newspaper editor was handed startling evidence that Britain's top law enforcement official knew there was a VIP pedophile network in Westminster, at the heart of the British government.

What happened next in the summer of 1984 helps to explain how shocking allegations of rape and murder against some of the country's most powerful men went unchecked for decades.

Less than 24 hours after starting to inquire about the dossier presented to him by a senior Labour Party politician, the editor was confronted in his office by a furious member of parliament who threatened him and demanded the documents.



"He was frothing at the mouth and really shouting and spitting in my face," Don Hale told The Daily Beast.

"He was straight at me like a raging lion; he was ready to knock me through the wall."

Despite the MP's explosive intervention, Hale refused to hand over the papers which appeared to show that Leon Brittan, Margaret Thatcher's Home Secretary, was fully aware of a pedophile network that included top politicians.

The editor's resistance was futile; the following morning, police officers from the counter-terror and intelligence unit known as Special Branch burst into the newspaper office, seized the material and threatened to have Hale arrested if he ever reported what had been found.

More than 30 years later, an inquiry into allegations of child sex abuse rings, murder, and cover-ups has been launched by the British government after [Scotland Yard detectives said they believed statements by victims](#) who claimed they were systematically abused as young boys at sex abuse parties attended by judges, politicians, intelligence officers, and staff at the royal palaces.

In 1983, a controversial MP, Geoffrey Dickens, had made a series of incendiary claims about active pedophiles in the corridors of power.

He handed a file containing the names of alleged perpetrators to Leon Brittan; publicly the authorities shrugged off the claims and no trial or prosecution would follow. The dossier mysteriously disappeared.

Decades later, Brittan claimed he had simply handed the papers to his subordinates to investigate and heard no more about it.

Last year, he was forced to clarify his statement when it emerged that he had later written to Dickens to say the initial investigation had been deemed “worth pursuing” by investigators.

It is now claimed that confidential Home Office papers collated by Baroness Castle of Blackburn and passed to Don Hale, editor of her local newspaper, the Bury Messenger, claimed that Brittan had played an active role in overseeing the investigation into the pedophile network.

“Leon Brittan was mentioned in everything you picked up, his fingerprints were over everything, he was the instigator,” Hale said.

“He really had his finger on the pulse, he wanted to know everything about it; all the documents were cc’d back to Leon Brittan or it was an instruction directly from Leon Brittan.”

Brittan, a protégé of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, had been promoted to Home Secretary at the age of 43, making him the youngest person to preside over Britain’s domestic law enforcement and national security apparatus since Winston Churchill before the First World War.

Brittan, who died in January, [has been accused of raping a woman and sexually abusing boys](#). He denied the allegations and was never charged, although police investigations have continued after his death.

Baroness Castle, then Barbara Castle, a Labour member of the European parliament, told Hale she did not trust Brittan to investigate the allegations thoroughly.

“Barbara never said he was a pedophile, she was just very, very hostile about him. ‘He’s the last person you want this to go to,’ she said, which inferred that he was somehow involved,” Hale explained.

Worried about the integrity of the Home Office investigation, Castle had tried to interest the major newspapers in the classified documents but she turned to Hale when they rejected her overtures.

“She was saying, ‘I’ve been everywhere else, I’ve been to the nationals, nobody would touch it with a barge pole, but what do you think?’” Hale recalled. “As a journalist of course I was interested.”

Great Britain’s notoriously tough libel laws insured that obviously he couldn’t repeat the allegations included in the Home Office papers that about 16 MPs and members of the House of Lords, and 30 high-profile figures from the Church of England, private schools, and big business, were members of, and advocates for, the Paedophile Information Exchange.

The shadowy group, which operated partly in the open, campaigned for the age of consent to be abolished and incest to be legalized. It also allowed pedophiles to send each other secure mail and to meet in person.

Instead, Hale planned to run a story explaining that the Home Office was actively investigating these men and repeat some of the concerns voiced to him by Castle, who died in 2002.

He set about contacting some of the men named in the papers, and the Home Office, for their response. The very next morning he was surprised to see the 400-pound figure of Cyril Smith, the Liberal Party MP for nearby Rochdale, arrive at the office.

“I’d interviewed him probably four times, and when he came in I was like, ‘Oh, hello, Cyril.’ And he was, ‘Never mind all that.’ And he was straight at me,” Hale said.

“He said to me quite clearly, ‘I know who’s given you this, it’s Barbara Castle.’ I wouldn’t say who it was, but it was pretty obvious he knew. He’s a hell of a sized guy, he’s over six feet tall and he’s huge; took up three seats. He’s not a guy you could deal with easily, he was a horror.”

Hale managed to stonewall Smith but the following morning, he had more visitors. “That’s when Special Branch turned up,” he said.

Three vehicles pulled up to the newspaper offices and about 15 men barged inside. Two pushed him up against a wall and brandished a search warrant and something they described as a “D-notice.”

The D-notice system was established in 1912 and was supposed to be used on very rare occasions when national security could be threatened by a news story.

The rest of the men were searching for the files, which they described as stolen, confidential Home Office papers.

“These bully boys come storming in, they said, ‘We’re not here to negotiate. Hand them over or we’ll arrest you now.’

“I couldn’t argue, because as soon as you opened the files it had got ‘Not to be removed’, ‘Confidential’ and ‘For your eyes only’ — all these sort of things on them. I wouldn’t have had a hope in hell legally. I would have ended up in prison and the story would have gone nowhere,” he said.

The story went nowhere for a generation.

A new breed of backbench politician began to reopen these issues in the last couple of years. Simon Danczuk, MP for Rochdale since 2010, focused on one of his parliamentary predecessors.

In a [book published last year](#), he revealed that Sir Cyril Smith, the man who “had steam coming out of his ears” as he remonstrated with Don Hale, was himself allegedly a predatory pedophile with more than 140 complaints filed against him. Throughout his life he had been protected from prosecution.

Among the retired police officers Danczuk interviewed, one recalled the time Special Branch officers forbade them from asking a victim about Smith.

Others remembered the day Smith was allowed to walk out of a police station without charge despite indecent images being found in his car after an unexplained telephone call from London.

It wasn’t just Special Branch that seemed keen to keep MPs out of the clutches of the law. In a [candid interview for the BBC in 1995](#), Tim Fortescue, a former Conservative Party chief whip, described the grubby calculations routinely applied within elite political circles:

“Anyone with any sense who was in trouble would come to the whips and tell them the truth, and say now, ‘I’m in a jam, can you help?’ It might be debt, it might be a scandal involving small boys, or any kind

of scandal which a member seemed likely to be mixed up in, they'd come and ask if we could help.

"And if we could, we did. We would do everything we can because we would store up brownie points. That sounds a pretty nasty reason but one of the reasons is, if we can get a chap out of trouble, he'll do as we ask forever more."

Fortescue's callous words could have come directly from the script of [**House of Cards**, the original British version](#) of which was first broadcast in 1990.

There is growing evidence that MI5 and MI6, Britain's security services, took a similar view.

[MI5 is alleged to have repeatedly blocked investigations](#) into a sex abuse ring at the Kincora children's home in Northern Ireland in order to protect its intelligence-gathering operation.

The longtime deputy director of MI6, and former High Commissioner in Canada, Peter Hayman was himself allegedly a pedophile, and was ultimately named as such in parliament by Geoffrey Dickens. Hayman had been caught with explicit material in 1978 but no charge was brought.

Secret files discovered at the National Archives this year revealed that the attorney general at the time believed it wasn't in the public interest for Hayman to be prosecuted. [Prime Minister Thatcher ordered his depravity to be concealed from the public.](#)

Thatcher must also have known about the allegations against her Home Secretary, Leon Brittan, because 1984's most explosive gossip had appeared on the pages of the scurrilous Private Eye newspaper.

Her bodyguard Barry Strevens now says he [personally warned](#) her that another of her most trusted lieutenants, Sir Peter Morrison, had also abused underage boys. She appointed Morrison to run her 1990 re-election campaign regardless.

Time and again crimes were reported but voices from above silenced the complaints before they came to court.

Carl, who does not wish to give his second name, told The Daily Beast that this culture of secrecy, which had apparently paralyzed the British legal system, helped to scare off victims who wanted to report their powerful abusers.

Carl was abused by a pedophile ring from the age of 7, and the emotional and physical torture went on for nine years. Some of his attackers, he says, were men with influence and authority.

“The authority is not what stops people from speaking out, it’s the fear that is instilled by these people,” he said.

“It appears the cover-ups did happen and it makes survivors very wary because you don’t know who you can have confidence in to report.”

One of the people who dedicated their lives to amplifying the voices of the victims, trying to ensure the powerful would be held to account, was Liz Davies.

In the late '80s and early '90s, she was a social worker in Islington, North London, with an unusual problem: Teenage boys, usually so reluctant to seek help, would line up outside her office on Hornsey Road waiting to come inside.

She would later discover that the international office of the Paedophile Information Exchange was just a few hundred yards from her desk, and her patch was home to a host of prolific child attackers linked into a network of powerful abuse rings that stretched from Westminster to Northern Ireland, Wales, and the island of Jersey in the Channel.

In 1990, she raised concerns at a local council meeting that a large number of boys in the area were showing signs of abuse. She claimed that Margaret Hodge, then leader of Islington council and later the Minister for Children under Tony Blair, ignored her warnings.

It was 2014 before Hodge would [apologize for her “shameful naivety”](#) in failing to properly investigate the claims of abuse. She is now chair of the Public Accounts Committee, which is responsible for oversight of all government spending.

Determined to continue her own investigation into the abuse, Davies began working with a colleague in the police force to gather more evidence.

“We started interviewing a lot of the boys. With this being a small area, I knew them, I knew their families, I’d helped their parents, so I wasn’t seen as a bad person,” she told The Daily Beast.

“They didn’t like the police because they were always nicking them for things but I would get them to speak to the police officer.”

They started putting maps up around the office, linking the boys, listing those affected and those suspected of abusing them. “We were breaking a lot of ground,” she said.

Then came a call from the regional headquarters. Davies and her boss, and her police counterpart and his boss were summoned for a meeting.

“We were both told to drop all our investigations, that we had no evidence and we had no right to be interviewing the boys,” she said.

It was a heartbreaking moment, but this mini-abuse fighting team vowed to continue their work. “We made an agreement that we would carry on under the radar and that’s what we did,” she said.

In 1991, their investigations led to [the conviction of a fire official called Roy Caterer](#). When police officers raided his home they found exactly what her boys had described, along with albums and albums of indecent photos.

Davies thought her work would finally be taken seriously by the authorities; she was wrong.

She had amassed evidence of abuse perpetrated against 61 victims, but she claims council officials continued to tell her to stop causing trouble.

A year later she finally quit social services when she says she discovered that the boys she had been trying to save were being sent back into the Islington care home system only to suffer yet more sexual abuse.

“I was networking these children into another network which was running within the care homes. I was handing over the most vulnerable, sexually exploited children to more pedophiles,” she said.

“I have to live with that.”

Davies took a suitcase stuffed with evidence, including graphic photographs, to the Metropolitan Police.

She said the well-intentioned superintendent looked at her haul and mournfully confessed that powerful figures still controlled what might

be exposed.

“I won’t be able to investigate here at Scotland Yard,” he said.

By Nico Hines, [Thedailybeast](#).